

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ❖ Chantilly ❖ Great Falls ❖ Herndon ❖ McLean ❖ Oak Hill ❖ Oakton ❖ Reston ❖ Vienna

At Mountain View graduation June 2 at Centreville High, graduate Vanessa Sandoval holds her daughter Yareli, 10 months, wearing a mini cap and gown. At left is cousin Abby Lopez.



ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 16 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 18

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Early-Voting for Primary Begins This Week

PAGE 6

Moorefield Bricks Tell Poignant Story

PAGE 10

Resilience Inspires at Mountain View

PAGE 4

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Virginia Lawmakers Scrutinize NextEra's \$66.8B Acquisition of Dominion Energy

Energy Commission evaluates ratepayer protections, regulatory oversight and clean-energy compliance at June 9 briefing.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

From the waters of the Potomac River and the city of Alexandria down to the coastal ports of Norfolk, then heading west to the state border, every resident of Virginia would be impacted by NextEra Energy's proposed \$66.8 billion acquisition of Richmond-based Dominion Energy if the deal receives final regulatory approval. The Energy Commission of Virginia met June 9 to address, among other items on its agenda, that specific proposal.

The political responsibility of tracking that massive statewide impact falls squarely on a 14-member legislative panel dominated by local Northern Virginia leadership, including Commission Chairman Sen. Scott Surovell (D-Fairfax), House Majority Leader Charniele L. Herring (D-Alexandria), Del. Irene Shin (D-Fairfax) and Del. Richard C. "Rip" Sullivan Jr. (D-McLean).

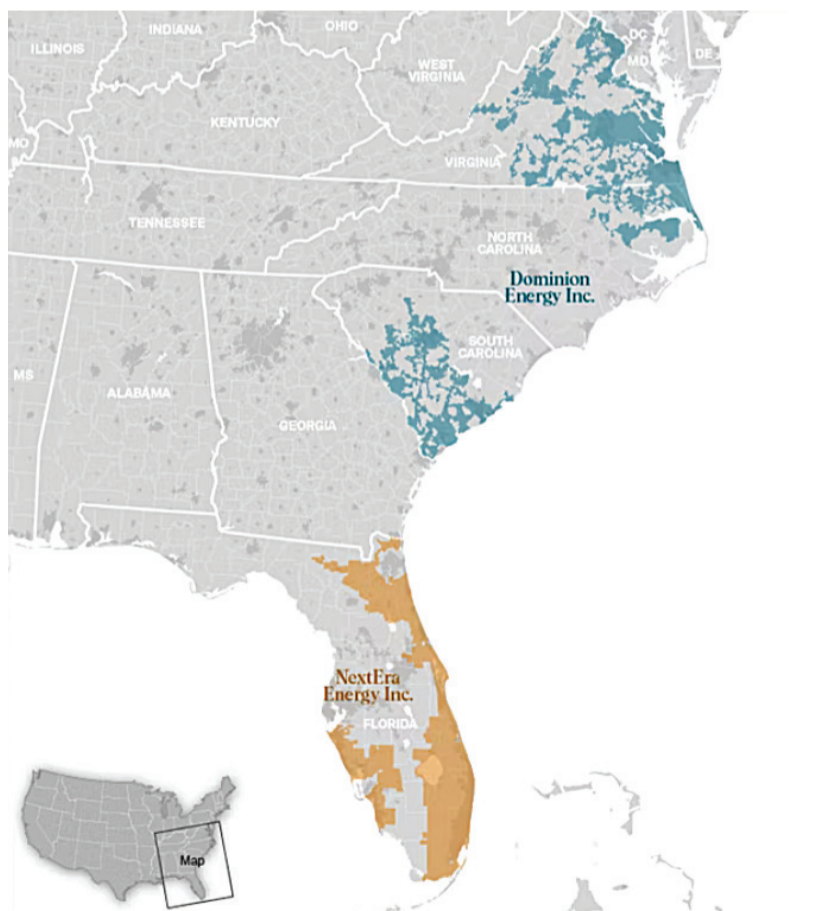
Members of the commission warned that a



SENATE OF VIRGINIA YOUTUBE CHANNEL

The Energy Commission of Virginia meets for a legislative hearing in the General Assembly Building in Richmond, Virginia, June 9. Lawmakers convened to review a range of topics, among them the proposed acquisition of Dominion Energy by NextEra Energy.

SEE VIRGINIA LAWMAKERS, PAGE 12



S&P GLOBAL MARKET INTELLIGENCE

A map details the combined geographic footprint and regulated service territories of NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy following their announced \$66.8 billion merger. The data, reviewed during an Energy Commission hearing in Richmond, Virginia, June 9, outlines NextEra's primary base in Florida alongside Dominion's territories in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

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VIRGINIA DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

A drone aerial view shows a Microsoft data center campus used in a June 9 presentation to the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation in Richmond, Virginia. Such facilities drive the expanding electricity demand that utility regulators in Virginia are evaluating.

Principal Praises Students' Confidence in Themselves

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Mountain View High's Class of 2026 graduates.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Mountain View High graduations always touch the heart, and the one held June 2 at Centerville High was no exception. That's because its students have walked a much tougher road to reach that day than have most students.

Some have come from foreign countries without knowing English, and others have left their former schools for an educational atmosphere more suitable for them. But whatever the reason, they all found a home at Mountain View with its focus on the school's motto of "Family, Love and Respect."

"In this landmark year, we mark 30 years of Mountain View excellence," Assistant Principal Brittaney Mohrbacher told them. "And over the last four years, you've carved out a story entirely your

SEE MOUNT VIEW HIGH PAGE 14



Grad Ananth Vuppalachchi with (from left) mom and dad Sunita and Sudarshan Vuppalachchi; cousin and aunt Megha and Aparna Kakaraparti, respectively; and brother Anish Vuppalachchi.



Graduate Amiyah Jackson (holding flowers) celebrates with her friends and family after the ceremony.



Grad Andrew Aguilar-Estrada poses with (from left) dad Patricio Aguilar, sister Brittany Aguilar, mom Monica Estrada, and brother Adalberto Aguilar, plus friends Bella Moreno, Walter Lopez and Piero Perez.



Grad Breanna Ankomah poses with (back row, from left) brother Michael Walker, sister Princess Lartey, mom Fidelia Donkoh, and sister Stephanie Walker; and (front row, from left) younger brother and sister, Raymond and Rayna McCarthy, ages 3 and 6, respectively.

'Don't Ever Give Up; You Will Achieve Your Dreams'

Mountain View students share their stories of perseverance.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The highlight of each Mountain View High graduation is when the chosen student speakers share their personal stories. And during the June 2 ceremony, three graduating seniors did just that.

"Their stories aren't just their own," said Assistant Principal Brittaney Mohrbacher, as she introduced them. "They're a mirror reflecting the resilience, resolve and relentless spirit of the entire graduating class."

Adelaide Rodriguez

"I've been moving all my life; from Tanzania to Turkey, I've lived all over the world. My dad's job as a diplomat required this of us. The first time we left the country was when I was a month old and we moved to Venezuela. From there, I ended up going to 11 schools and living in six countries. Moving around the world shaped me into who I am today, and I'm for-



Student speaker Adelaide Rodriguez with Principal Erin Whatley.



Student speaker Juana Reymundo-Gallego with Erin Whatley.



Student speaker Kimberly Lopez with Erin Whatley.

ever grateful for the opportunities, friends and cultures I've been introduced to.

However, that's not to say moving didn't have its challenges. Every three years, I lost everything I was used to – relationships with teachers, peers and the school system I was in. Around 10th grade, shortly after moving to Turkey, I was diagnosed with major depressive disorder, as well as anxiety. This led me and my family to move back to Virginia to get the help I

needed.

During that time, I was also dealing with my parents divorcing, my mom moving away and the loss of my childhood dog. To further compound my struggles, I was in a new environment and high school. I ended up struggling with my mental health even further, eventually leading to hospitalization. I never went to class, and I couldn't get out of bed. School constantly gave me panic attacks and felt impossible to go to. I'd given up on

myself. It felt like the world was ending and I was a failure.

This carried on until the end of my junior year, until I enrolled myself at Mountain View. [This school] was the best thing that could have happened to me. My mental health didn't improve immediately or without work. But at Mountain View, I finally felt supported, like I belonged. School no longer felt like the end of the world every morning – it felt doable.

From the teachers, counselors

and administrators – who not only supported and listened to me but greeted me every morning with a smile – I began to regain faith in myself and want a future. But Mountain View wasn't my only support. Words can't describe how grateful I am for my sisters, Charlotte and Penelope, who were and are always there for me. I'm also thankful for my father for always supporting me, despite everything I've put him

SEE 'DON'T EVER GIVE UP', PAGE 14
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NEWS

George D. Thomas To Head FCEDA

The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority Commission named George D. Thomas as its next President and Chief Executive Officer.

Thomas brings more than 25 years of leadership experience across economic development, technology, infrastructure, investment attraction, workforce development, and public-private partnerships. His appointment comes at a pivotal moment.

“George Thomas represents the next generation of economic development leadership,” said FCEDA Commission Chair James Quigley.

Thomas’s selection reflects Fairfax County’s commitment to leading the industries expected to drive future economic growth, including artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, national defense, advanced computing and space commercialization.

As President and CEO of Connected DMV,



George D. Thomas

Thomas built a globally recognized innovation organization, growing it from a volunteer coalition into a multi-million-dollar enterprise building next generation industry clusters to advance global competitiveness.

Before leading Connected DMV, Thomas served as a Partner at IBM and held senior roles at leading global firms, directing transformative initiatives in technology commercialization, smart cities, infrastructure modernization, economic development and industry cluster formation.

“Fairfax County stands at the center of extraordinary economic and technological change,” Thomas said. “Advances in artificial intelligence, quantum, energy, aerospace, defense, national security, and other key industries are creating new opportunities for innovation, investment, and growth.”

Thomas will begin his tenure in August. He succeeds FCEDA President and CEO Victor Hoskins, who departs after nearly seven years.

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Fairfax County Voters Head Back to Ballot Box

Early voting begins Thursday, June 18; quick guide to the Aug. 4 dual primary election.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Virginia Department of Elections has requested a primary election to nominate Democratic and Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and local offices. Because Virginia holds open primaries, voters may choose either a Democratic or a Republican ballot, but not both.

Early in-person voting for the Aug. 4 dual primary begins Thursday, June 18, a day earlier than the standard 45-day window because state offices are closed Friday, June 19, in observance of Juneteenth.

Depending on where they live, Fairfax County voters are split among Virginia's 8th, 10th and 11th Congressional Districts.

Key Dates, Locations and Deadlines

Early in-person voting runs from June 18 through Aug. 1. Any registered Fairfax County voter may vote early at any county early voting location. Locations and hours vary throughout the voting period. Voters must present a Virginia driver's license, U.S. passport, or another acceptable form of identification, or be prepared to sign an ID confirmation statement.

Locations Opening June 18:

- ❖ Fairfax County Government



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

A multilingual early voting sign marks the start of in-person early voting for the Aug. 4 dual primary election on Thursday, June 18.

Center (12000 Government Center Pkwy.): Open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

- ❖ Mount Vernon Governmental Center (2511 Parkers Lane) & North County Governmental Center (1801 Cameron Glen Drive): Open weekdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

- ❖ Weekend Hours (All three sites): Open Saturdays, July 25

and Aug. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sundays.

- ❖ Holiday Closures: All locations will be closed June 19 and July 3.

Locations Opening July 22:

Thirteen additional satellite locations (including regional libraries such as Burke Centre, Centreville, Great Falls, Herndon Fort-

nightly and Tysons-Pimmit) will open for voting. These sites operate on weekdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and on Saturdays, July 25 and Aug. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The deadline to register to vote or request a mail ballot is July 24 at 5 p.m. Same-day provisional registration is available after this date.

Location on Election Day, Aug. 4: Voters must vote at their assigned precinct polling place, which will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

What Is on the Ballot?

Only offices with more than one qualified candidate will appear on a primary ballot. Voters can verify their specific congressional district, registration status and assigned Election Day polling place online at elections.virginia.gov.

Democratic Primary Ballots:

- ❖ 8th Congressional District: Features a five-way primary race among Mo Seifeldin, Michael Christian Duffin, incumbent Donald S. Beyer Jr., Adam M. Dunigan and Lorena Thorne Bruner.

- ❖ 10th and 11th Congressional Districts: No Democratic primary elections are being held.

Republican Primary Ballots:

- ❖ 8th Congressional District: Features a three-way statewide primary race for the U.S. Senate among Bert Mizusawa, Kim Farington and David E. Williams.

There is no House primary.

- ❖ 10th Congressional District: Features a primary race for both the U.S. Senate (Mizusawa, Farington, Williams) and a four-way race for the U.S. House of Representatives among Dave Beckwith, Julie Perry, Anthony Suttles and Sam Wong.

- ❖ 11th Congressional District: Features a three-way statewide primary race for the U.S. Senate among Bert Mizusawa, Kim Farington and David E. Williams. There is no House primary.

Voting by Mail

Any registered voter can request a mail ballot without an excuse, but the application must specify which party ballot for processing. The deadline to request a mail ballot for the Aug. 4 primary is 5 p.m. July 24.

Mail returns must be post-marked by Aug. 4 and received by noon on Aug. 7. Secure drop boxes are available 24 hours a day outside the Fairfax County Government Center, at any early voting site during voting hours, or at polling places on Election Day before 7 p.m.

Voters can learn more about how to request a mail ballot, track its status, or view a full list of community drop boxes by visiting the county's official website at Fairfax County Elections. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/>

E-Bikes Are Here E-bikes are popular, can be dangerous.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Bicyclists do face a number of challenges on the Fairfax County bike trail network but when an e-bike comes flying by at relatively high speeds the danger elevates. In late May, the Fairfax County Police Department was on the scene of a crash involving a vehicle and an e-bike at Cedar Lane and Electric Avenue in Dunn Loring. The adult male cyclist was taken to a local hospital in life-threatening condition.

Fairfax County is aware that the speedy e-bikes are out there and recently posted a set of rules and recommendations titled "E-Bikes Gain Speed — Here's What to Know Sharing



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

At Strictly E-Bikes in Old Town, the mental benefits of riding e-bikes is stressed.

the Road." There are more e-bikes out on the roads and trails these days, so the rules focus on speeds, yielding and sharing the spaces.

In Virginia, there are three classes of e-bike and for Class 3, the pedal assisted e-bike that goes up to 28 miles per hour, the rider must be at least 14 years old and must wear a helmet.

The county says that e-bikes are generally allowed anywhere tradi-

tional bikes are permitted unless signs say otherwise. In most areas, that includes sidewalks.

The Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling recently published a blog post "Safe Trails for All: Responsible E-Bike Use Matters," that is full of safety recommendations for all. Their focus reports of reckless operation of high-speed e-bikes on local trails and shared-use paths.

Although FABB credits e-bikes

for replacing car trips for some riders and enabling a wider range of people to ride that may be limited on a regular bike because of age or physical limitations, they also point out that e-bikes are linked to an increase in injuries too. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeon Brian R. Waterman, MD, "the risk of fractures, dislocations and head trauma increases as e-bike usage becomes more popular.

The best protection starts with awareness, proper protection and responsible riding."

On the trails and streets of Alexandria, e-bikes have a prominent place. Handy Bikes in Alexandria sells e-bikes as well as regular bicycles, but they do have a page on safety that includes a section on e-bike safety. One part focuses on traffic and pedestrians, while the "Take Care With Speed," section reminds riders of the new speeds associated with e-bikes. "Caution is key," it says.

Russell Cestone at Handy Bikes knows the speeds of e-bikes are an issue and when the cyclists aren't following the rules, it can "give a bad name to e-bikes he said.

In Alexandria, Handy Bikes sees all kinds of riders opting for the e-bike.

Denizens of Capitol Hill

Where are they when we need them?

By JOHN LOVAAS
INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE



John Lovaas

Who could have imagined our great country in the horrific mess we have today? Our chief executive is a totally self-absorbed wannabe dictator. He's created a force of masked thugs reminiscent of Hitler's brownshirts who brutalize immigrants and non-whites — men, women and children on our streets — detaining them in corporate ICE detention centers and deporting them to third world countries. He puts troops armed for combat on our cities' streets — just to intimidate. He has seriously weakened U.S. national security worldwide. He threatens to invade friendly countries and attacks others while abandoning long-time allies in favor of cooperation with Russia. Meanwhile, he and his family gorge themselves at the public trough.

His MAGA party narrowly controls both houses of Congress. A once-proud Party has replaced legislators with subservient toadies. The nominal opposition Democrats make ineffective noises, more carping than actions or alternatives. The judiciary is the only remaining guardrail against autocracy. But courts are cumbersome, slow-moving apparatuses unable to keep up with Trump's Project 2025 "flood the zone" tactics. By the time a court rules on an issue Trump has a fait accompli and is already several outrages ahead of the law.

So, how can frustrated northern Virginians fight back to protect residents, including immigrants, from Federal overreach and abuse?

What about our two U.S. Senators, Tim Kaine and Mark Warner and (new) Congressman James Walkinshaw? All are Democrats

SEE DENIZENS OF , PAGE 15



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
Loudoun	11235	663	DOWNEY MILL ROAD	TRIB. CATOCTIN CREEK	5/27/2026
Smyth	17619	639N	SULPHUR SPRINGS ROAD	BRANCH	5/13/2026
Grayson	8733	58	HIGHLANDS PARKWAY	CABIN CREEK	5/6/2026

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit vdot.virginia.gov and navigate to Travel and traffic/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov.

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Free community shred event: bring up to three boxes or large bags of paper for secure disposal.



Saturday, June 20 from 9am - 12pm
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COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE



SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY

Juneteenth Recognition

Recent Fairfax High School graduate Mark Anthony Nelson, center, accepts a proclamation from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors designating June 19 as Juneteenth during the board's June 9 meeting. Nelson is a steering committee member for My Brother's Keeper and serves on the county's Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee. See Connection Entertainment and Calendar pages 12-13 for listings of many Juneteenth events.

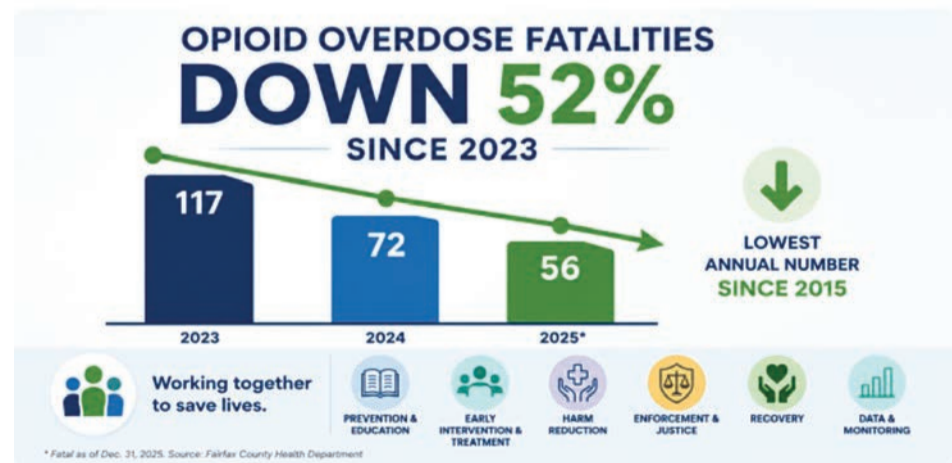


SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY

Marshall High School, Hayfield Secondary School Robotics Teams Recognized

Members of the George C. Marshall High School and Hayfield Secondary School robotics teams are recognized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors during a meeting June 9. Both Fairfax County Public Schools teams recently competed at the FIRST Robotics World Championship in Houston, where Marshall High School's alliance finished seventh overall and Hayfield Secondary School, wearing orange, placed third within its tournament alliance.

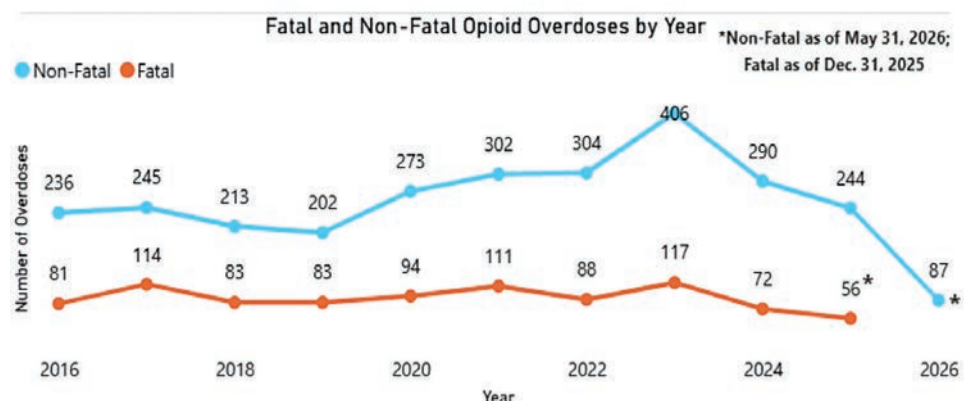
Health and Human Services



SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY

Opioid Overdose Fatalities Decrease; Concern on Emerging Substances

An evolving illicit drug supply continues to pose a significant national and local challenge, threatening to reverse recent declines in drug overdose trends. The Fairfax Health District recorded a 22% reduction in fatal opioid overdoses in 2025 compared to the previous year, with 56 deaths reported in 2025, down from 72 in 2024.



SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY

Local public health officials are tracking dangerous and emerging substances of concern, including kratom and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), a highly concentrated kratom extract that targets opioid receptors in the body. As of late May, the county has recorded 87 non-fatal opioid overdoses, compared to a total of 244 over the course of 2025. Regularly updated data can be viewed on the Fairfax County Health Department's Opioid Overdose Dashboard.



SCREENSHOT VIA BLACK VIRGINIA NEWS

The First Baptist Church of Vienna hosted its second annual Juneteenth parade on Saturday, June 13. The historic community march was followed by a Juneteenth celebration at the church that brought together community leaders, local vendors and neighborhood organizations.

First Baptist Church of Vienna Juneteenth Parade



SCREENSHOT VIA BLACK VIRGINIA NEWS

The Rev. Vernon Walton, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Vienna, cruises the parade route before speaking at the march's conclusion. Operating under the event's theme, "Walking in the Prayers of Our Ancestors," the post-parade festival featured live music, food trucks, craft vendors, children's entertainment, a free book giveaway and a voter registration drive.



Centreville High wins award for Stage Crew for "The Play that Goes Wrong" – Centreville's Callaghan Crofton, Amelia Loht and Lena Thepvongsa.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CAPPIES

Critics Team – Westfield's Critics Team members, (from left) Kiera McCrea, Mary Campbell, Grace Costanzo and Iris Cooper.

Centreville, Westfield High Win Cappie Awards

Congratulations to Centreville and Westfield High. Westfield won three Cappies awards for its critics and its play, "Puffs." Its honors were for Special Effects, Jonah Johnson and the SFX Team; Graduating Critic, Mary Campbell; and the Westfield Critics Team.

Centreville received the Stage Crew award for its play, "The Play that Goes Wrong." Honored were crew members Lena Thepvongsa, Callaghan Crofton and Amelia Loht. The Cappies Gala was held June 7 at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

– BONNIE HOBBS



Westfield wins award for Graduating Critic – Westfield's Mary Campbell.



Special Effects – Westfield's SFX Team, (from left) Rebecca Ryles, Jonah Johnson and Ella Mescher.

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Chuck Anderson, Vienna250 co-chair and Vienna town councilmember, shows two Scouts of Troop 1539 in Vienna the pressed footprint of an infant centered in the clay before the 18th-century brick was sun-dried in wooden forms and then fired in a kiln.



The bricks had been stacked on church property out of sight for decades.



The Scouts realize the lower rows of bricks have sunk into soft soil and will have to be shoveled out.

Vienna Scouts Unearth Enslaved Legacy at Moorefield

Intimate moments pressed into clay revealed 250 years later.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A dark, damp, overgrown corner hidden behind a blue trash dumpster in a church parking lot became a portal to a complex history born in early America more than 250 years ago.

On June 6, Scouts and families

from Troop 1539 in Vienna gathered at the site for their second time this spring, joining Assistant Scoutmaster Thomas Remmers for their final swing at a monumental task: removing, stacking, cleaning, and cataloging approximately two tons of remaining chimney bricks from Moorefield, the historic 18th-century home of Jeremiah Moore that was dismantled

in 2017. Moore's 600-acre estate once spanned the area between today's Nottoway Park and the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metro station.

"While the two-day project was a significant community service effort, it quickly transformed into a profound, emotional lesson in American history for all involved, bringing the physical artifacts of an enslaved legacy into the light,"

said Tyler McCarty, Troop 1539 Eagle Scout

Local leadership joining the Scouts' recovery team included Chuck Anderson, Vienna250 co-chair and Vienna town councilmember; Tracy McCarty, Vienna250 co-chair; Cynthia Griffiths, chief communications officer for Scouting America's National Capital Area Council; and Andrew Yu

of the Chinese Christian Church of Virginia which purchased the property of the former Vienna Baptist Church in December 2025.

Dispersed History, Found Again

Anderson explained to The Connection that Jeremiah Moore (1746–1815) was a Revolutionary War veteran, farmer, slaveholder
SEE INTIMATE MOMENTS, PAGE 11



Scouts position the pallets to hold the bricks.



The Scouts form a "bucket brigade" to pass the bricks from one person to another to move them from behind the dumpster to pallets that will be moved to Town of Vienna property.



A Scout uses a modified herringbone pattern, the ultimate interlocking technique for heavy, irregular building materials.

Intimate Moments Pressed into Clay Revealed 250 Years Later

FROM PAGE 10

and (itinerant) Baptist evangelist who advocated for the separation of church and state. According to Anderson, Moore was associated with Patrick Henry, who defended him in court after Moore was jailed for preaching without a license.

Moore also influenced George Mason. Inspired by Moore's case and the local movement, Mason drafted the Fairfax County Resolves in 1774 and later expanded the concepts into the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776).

According to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the Town of Vienna acquired Moore's vernacular farmhouse in 1975. The property was added to the Virginia Landmarks Register on Sept. 20, 1977, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 19, 1978. After falling into severe disrepair, the home was methodically dismantled in 2017 and subsequently delisted from the registers.

For more than two decades, the home's pieces were forgotten and lost to time. The trail went cold until a recent social media post by the Vienna250 committee, Anderson said.

"Our town public information officer put out a posting on Facebook with old pictures of the Moorefield house, saying it had been lost," Anderson explained. "A guy basically responded and said, 'No, it hasn't. I know where the boards are.'"

The wooden boards had been loaded into a truck and driven to Madison County. That tip led town staff to a resident who had been paying storage fees for the lumber. At that same meeting, former Fairfax City Mayor David Meyer revealed the location of the

forgotten chimney bricks, which had been left behind at the Vienna Baptist Church (now the Chinese Christian Church of Virginia). With the materials located, the physical labor began.

'My Child Did Exist'

Scouts worked to move the heavy, 250-year-old bricks onto pallets for town storage. But these weren't just ordinary building materials.

"One of the most remarkable things is these bricks were all made by hand, most likely by enslaved people," Anderson said. "Jeremiah Moore was a slaveholder. In the process, there would often be indentations of the fingerprints of the people who picked them up when the clay was still wet. You can put your hands in the fingerprints of someone from over 250 years ago."

Anderson held a brick in his hands. Pressed into the clay was the distinct, perfectly centered footprint of an infant. He noted that a second, different child's footprint was also discovered during the cleanup. "Finding the bricks with the children's footprints reminded me of some of the negative history of our country, since their parents were probably enslaved," said Tyler McCarty, Troop 1539 Eagle Scout.

Because these prints were placed on the flat face of the bricks, they would have been completely hidden from view once the chimney was built. Their placement suggests a deeply moving act of love and resistance.

"These footprints never would have been seen once the brick had been essentially used," Anderson said. "The only explanation is it



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Before being fired and built into the Moorefield chimney, this brick's soft clay accepted the footprint of an infant — a deliberate, lasting mark likely left by the parent hundreds of years ago.

was probably the mother or father of an enslaved child saying, 'I want the future to see the signature of my child. My child did exist and was real.' And they left them for us to discover."

Living Citizenship

For Troop 1539's leadership, the discoveries bridged the gap between community service and historical consciousness.

"The Boy Scouts of Scouting America is really built on service and teaching character and citizenship," said Thomas Remmers, Troop 1539 assistant scoutmaster. "What better way to teach citizen-



The 18th-century chimney bricks have held their secrets for nearly 250 years.

ship than through service projects? This one is fantastic because not only do we get to give back, but we get to learn about the history of our community and the citizenship that happened right here in Vienna, as it relates to the founding of our nation."

The ultimate goal for the salvaged materials is ambitious.

Anderson said if funding can be secured through grants and foundations, organizers hope to completely rebuild Moorefield, dedicated to religious freedom and the separation of church and state, thus preserving the legacy of Jeremiah Moore and the deeply personal, indelible marks of the families Moore enslaved.



Photo credit: Calder Loth/DHR, 1995

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Moorefield in the 1950s: the addition of a brick veneer exterior over the original wood-frame siding changed its look from a rustic farmhouse.



Assistant Scoutmaster Thomas Remmers.



Andrew Yu of the Chinese Christian Church of Virginia.

Virginia Lawmakers Scrutinize NextEra's \$66.8B Acquisition of Dominion Energy

FROM PAGE 3

compressed statutory review window could force the state to greenlight the acquisition before legislative safeguards can be enacted. The legislative panel, which is scheduled to be renamed the Energy Commission of Virginia on July 1, is closely tracking the deal's timeline. According to viriniageneralassembly.gov, "The purpose of the Commission is to monitor the State Corporation Commission's implementation of the Virginia Electric Utility Regulation Act."

Staff attorney Sarah Kinzer clarified the timeline under the Utility Transfers Act, explaining that the State Corporation Commission has 60 days to act on a petition and may extend that period by up to 120 days, for a total possible timeframe of 180 days. Surovell warned that the regulatory process will likely wrap up before the General Assembly can convene to write defensive standards.

"This is probably some of the biggest utility news this state has seen in decades," Surovell said.

Local experts and interested parties, including Bernie Gilmore of Clean Virginia, agreed that this window is too short to evaluate a merger that would create a combined market capitalization of nearly \$250 billion and 110 gigawatts of generation capacity. Commission on Electric Utility Regulation Executive Director Carrie Hearne designated the acquisition as the commission's top priority to explore how lawmakers can ensure the deal "does not harm the state's ratepayers, regulatory independence or clean energy commitments."

Fast Clock and Narrow Legal Test

Staff attorney Sarah Kinzer briefed members on the Virginia Utility Transfers Act, noting that the State Corporation Commission's review is narrow.

The statutory standard for review is whether "adequate service to the public at just and reasonable rates will be impaired or jeopardized." South Carolina has a similar standard, which Kinzer contrasted with North Carolina and Maryland, which apply a "public convenience and necessity" standard that includes additional factors such as benefits and no harm.

Shin emphasized the urgency. "I've heard from a lot of my constituents about concerns in this acquisition, and I think it's incumbent upon us to make sure we are protecting ratepayers through this process," Shin said.

Utility Expert: Timeline Is 'Not Possible'

Public-interest utility expert Scott Hempling criticized the tight six-month review window. "There is no way that a full hearing [on] the complexity of this transaction can occur in a six-month proceeding. That's not possible," Hempling said.

He framed the merger as a "sale of control" over a monopoly franchise and cautioned that corporate promises cannot substitute for binding legal safeguards.



STREAMING VIA SENATE OF VIRGINIA
YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Ed Baine, president of Dominion Energy Virginia, replies to Del. Rip Sullivan's question about the calculation of a proposed \$2.25 billion bill credit during an Energy Commission hearing in Richmond, Virginia, June 9. Baine testified that the amount is "not a magic number," but that the company's intent was to provide "meaningful," short-term relief for residential customers, noting, "If you look across the classes, it's roughly a \$10 per month credit for a residential customer," and confirmed it as "a commitment for two years."



STREAMING VIA SENATE OF VIRGINIA
YOUTUBE CHANNEL

State Sen. Scott Surovell, (D-Fairfax), chairman of the Energy Commission of Virginia, clarifies during a legislative hearing in Richmond, Virginia, June 9 that due to time constraints, the legislative body's capacity to review the proposed utility acquisition would be limited, noting, "probably the most we can do as a body is send a letter or something."

Dominion Outlines Upfront Cash Plan; Commits to Clean Energy

Ed Baine, president of Dominion Energy Virginia, outlined a \$2.25 billion financial package in near-term bill credits to offset consumer anxiety, with \$1.8 billion allotted to Virginia. Baine testified it was not a "magic number," but was intended to provide meaningful short-term relief for ratepayers while balancing long-term grid benefits. Commission members referenced the specific figure of \$1.78 billion allocated to the Commonwealth.



STREAMING VIA SENATE OF VIRGINIA
YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Sarah Kinzer, of the Division of Legislative Services, offers a summary of the Utility Transfers Act during an Energy Commission hearing in Richmond, Virginia, June 9. The act prohibits any person from acquiring or disposing of control of a public utility or its assets without prior approval from the State Corporation Commission.

Baine said that the combined corporate scale resulting from the merger would yield procurement and financing efficiencies. He also assured the commission that "it is still Dominion's intent to comply with the requirements of the Clean Economy Act," while simultaneously ensuring "grid reliability."

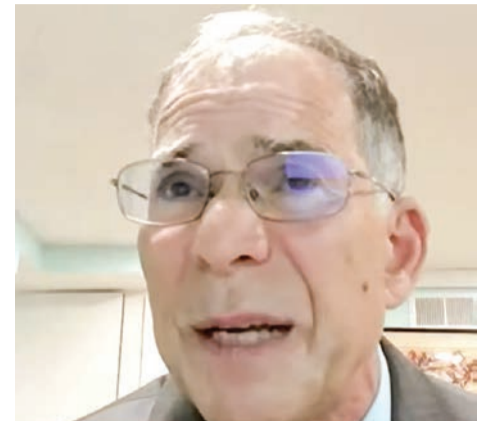
Public Pushback

Activists voiced deep concerns during public testimony. Jimmy Lee Jarvis of Progress Virginia warned that the merger could accelerate fossil fuel buildouts through "behind-the-meter" gas models. He noted that such projects, placed directly on customer property, would fall outside the reach and regulatory scrutiny of the Virginia Clean Economy Act.

Heaven Campbell provided examples of how a 2025 audit by Florida Power & Light, a subsidiary of NextEra Energy, resulted in significant hardships for existing customers. She testified some customers had their electronic payment options revoked for 12 months, forcing them to pay in person, while long-standing, preexisting customers — some had been customers for over 30 years — were forced to pay deposits as high as \$1,450. Failure to pay the deposits resulted in the threat of utility disconnection.

Commission Members

Ensuring tech demands do not unfairly shift costs onto state residential bills remains the primary task for the commission. Joining Chairman Sen. Scott Surovell on the legislative panel is Vice Chairman Del. Terry



STREAMING VIA SENATE OF VIRGINIA
YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Utility expert Scott Hempling testifies remotely before the Energy Commission of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia, June 9 regarding the proposed \$66.8 billion merger between NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy. Assessing the regulatory review process, Hempling said, "There is no way that a full hearing of the complexity of this transaction can occur in a six-month proceeding. That's not possible."

Kilgore. Rounding out the Senate members are Democrats L. Louise Lucas and R. Creigh Deeds, as well as Republican Mark Obenshain.

The House of Delegates roster is completed by Delegates Charniele Herring, Richard C. "Rip" Sullivan Jr., Michael Webert, Irene Shin and Destiny LeVere Bolling.

The panel also includes non-voting citizen members Meade Browder and Jesse Lynch, with one citizen seat currently vacant, alongside ex-officio member John Farmer from the Office of the

Attorney General.

Surovell concluded the meeting with a deadpan understatement, telling the room that they have "a couple little tiny issues" to resolve, drawing laughter from the audience — a nod to the oversight work ahead and tight time frame in which to do it.

While not stated at the June 9 legislative meeting, according to NextEra Energy's transcript of its May 18 investor call, Dominion CEO Robert M. Blue stated, "If we expect to file in July, then you're looking at a decision from the Virginia Commission in January." That timeline targets a deal that the companies claim will have massive global scale. The official joint merger press release is titled, "NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy to Combine, Creating the World's Largest Regulated Electric Utility Business and North America's Premier Energy Infrastructure Platform Benefiting Customers."

Editor's Note: A recorded video livestream of the full cross-examination and executive testimony is available via the Virginia Energy Commission Meeting archival portal.

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Forward-Looking Statements Are Not Guarantees

Comparing Comments by Dominion and NextEra executives.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Billions of dollars in customer bill credits and green energy targets are on the line as NextEra Energy moves to acquire Dominion Energy. While executives promise specific actions, their words are accompanied by a Securities and Exchange Commission warning that corporate promises are not a guarantee of future performance.

In an official corporate presentation slide deck filed with the SEC by Dominion Energy, a standard compliance slide titled “Cautionary Information” explains that forward-looking statements represent management’s current expectations and are not a guarantee of future performance. According to the filing, these non-binding statements include words and phrases such as “ambition,” “anticipate,” “estimate,” “believe,” “should,” “will” and “expect.”

Similar forward-looking statements were used by executives at a June 9 briefing of the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation, a legislative body scheduled to be renamed the Energy Commission of Virginia on July 1.

During the briefing, Edward Baine, president of Dominion Energy Virginia, focused on local operational realities, grid reliability, jobs and customer credits in Virginia. NextEra Energy Chairman, President and CEO John W. Ketchum anchored his strategy on scaling infrastructure, expanding natural gas to meet data center demands and leveraging a national corporate footprint, according to an official May 18 merger transcript available on NextEra’s investor relations website.

Virginia Clean Energy Compliance

Dominion Energy — During an exchange with Del. Rip Sullivan Jr. at the June 9 legislative briefing, Baine testified, “Absolutely,” regarding Dominion’s intent to comply with the Virginia Clean Economy Act. Baine clarified that “the first goal is to meet the requirements” of the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard while maintaining grid reliability, adding that deviations would occur only if reliability concerns explicitly require them.

NextEra Energy — Speaking to investors on a May 18 conference call, Ketchum framed the acquisition around massive national scale. “Combined, we’d be number one in America in total power generation, the world’s leader in renewables and energy storage, America’s number one gas generator and second largest nuclear generator,” Ketchum said.

When asked about future clean energy generation, Ketchum outlined an “all of the above” strategy to support skyrocketing power demands from Virginia data centers while keeping electricity affordable. “Meeting future demand reliably and responsibly will require a broad buildout of [renewables, storage, transmission] and [gas pipelines],” Ketchum said, later adding, “It’s going to take everything. It’s going to take a



NEXTERA ENERGY
John W. Ketchum,
chairman, president and CEO of NextEra Energy.



DOMINION ENERGY
Edward H. “Ed” Baine, executive vice president of utility operations and president of Dominion Energy Virginia.

combination of natural gas-fired generation, a combination of nuclear.”

Bill Credit Commitment

Dominion Energy — Baine outlined a total package of \$2.25 billion in temporary bill credits across three state jurisdictions, noting that “about \$1.8 billion of that would be in Virginia” to directly address consumer affordability concerns.

NextEra Energy — Ketchum anchored the day-one benefits of the merger on the same multi-state package. “The combined company will continue to put customers first and maintain a commitment to affordability,” Ketchum said on the investor call. “That would start with \$2.25 billion in proposed bill credits for Dominion Energy customers in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, spread out over the first two years post-closing.”

Ketchum added that the financial benefits would extend past the initial transition window, stating, “beyond that two-year period



NEXTERA ENERGY VIA SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE

An official SEC Form 425 filing details the proposed \$66.8 billion merger agreement between NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy. Members of the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation reviewed the document during a June 9 legislative briefing in Richmond, Virginia, where Dominion Energy Virginia President Ed Baine presented the transaction’s details and answered questions.

with this bill credit, with the world class scale and operating platform that we have, that’s going to really help with affordability over the long-term as we invest capital to meet increased power demand needs.”

Headquarters and Workforce

Dominion Energy — When questioned about the potential for a Florida-based parent company to reduce the Richmond workforce, Baine said there might be future “synergies” among certain corporate groups, but he emphasized the necessity of a permanent local presence. “If you think about who’s here today, part of the Virginia utility serving customers within Virginia, I would expect the vast majority of people to be here way beyond those protections,” Baine said. He

noted that the company’s localized constituent services and storm restoration teams are inherently essential to daily operations and will continue their work unchanged.

NextEra Energy — Ketchum committed to a dual-headquarters structure split between NextEra’s home base in Juno Beach, Florida, and Richmond, alongside maintaining Dominion’s existing regional operational headquarters in Cayce, South Carolina. “Local operations are going to be retained,” Ketchum said during the investor call. “It’s going to be the same team and the same faces that customers know and trust. We’re going to have a dual headquarters, Juno Beach and Richmond.

We’re going to have an operating headquarters in Cayce, South Carolina.”

We expect the combined company’s scale will create significant benefits for customers, employees, the communities we serve and shareholders

Strategic Drivers

- ✔ Creates largest regulated utility and power company in America, diversified across several jurisdictions
- ✔ One of the strongest balance sheets in the sector + 100 bps improvement in downgrade threshold metric¹
- ✔ Stronger credit profile for Dominion Energy and Dominion Energy Virginia
- ✔ World-class supply chain with unmatched buying power
- ✔ Strongest large load opportunity set in the country (FL, VA, NC, SC – and across America)
- ✔ 2nd largest nuclear fleet in the United States
- ✔ Largest gas generation fleet in the United States
- ✔ Global leader in renewables and energy storage
- ✔ Capital and operational enhancements across generation, distribution and transmission
- ✔ Industry leader in data, analytics, and AI-driven capabilities
- ✔ Industry leading management team with strong continuity across the enterprise
- ✔ One of the industry’s leading adjusted earnings growth, cash flow growth and TSR targets

1. S&P Ratings and Moody’s
2. 2025–2032E
3. From 2025–2032E: includes Dominion Energy, Florida Power & Light and NextEra Energy electric and gas transmission regulatory capital employed and invested capital
4. 48.5 GW at Dominion Energy, 21 GW at Florida Power & Light and >60 GW at NextEra Energy Resources
5. Based on business mix methodology used by the credit rating agencies

NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy combined

9%+ Adjusted EPS growth rate²

~11% regulatory capital employed growth³

130+ GW large load pipeline⁴

Top decile operator across technologies

~80% regulated / 90–95% regulated and long-term contracted⁵

‘A-/Baa1/A-’ rated balance sheet

NEXTERA ENERGY VIA SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

A slide from an SEC Form 425 filing regarding the merger agreement between NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy features forward-looking language, including the heading, “We expect the combined company’s...”

'Don't Ever Give Up; You Will Achieve Your Dreams'

FROM PAGE 4

through, and to my Grandma who always shows up for me.

Lastly, I'm thankful for myself and how hard I've worked and fought to stand before you today. Even with every challenge I've faced, I'm graduating – not only on time – but with great grades. My future might not exactly be what my freshman self had planned, but I'm still proud of myself. Next year, I'll be going to college at NOVA, where I'll then have the chance to attend the university of my choice and major in international business.

From there, I hope to travel the world again – this time, on my own terms. I wish nothing but the best for Mountain View in the future and hope it continues to inspire and support students. I'm proud to call myself an alumni of Mountain View High School."

Juana Reymundo-Gallego

My speech is a thank you to the people who helped me make it through these past four years to now. Four years ago, I walked into Mountain View wondering where the cafeteria was in such a small school. Today, I'm standing here not wanting to leave. Mountain View has been my home. At 17 years old, I got placed into foster care with my sisters. We couldn't live with my mom [anymore].

On top of that, two months lat-

er, I broke my leg and was in a wheelchair. But I came to school every day. The first person I want to thank tonight is my sister Ana. You're smart, beautiful and so much more than a rebellious teenager. And above all, you're so brave. I know we weren't always the best to each other, but I'm so proud to call you my sister. I know there's nothing that can be broken that we can't fix together.

My dearest mom, I know we didn't always have the best mother-daughter relationship, but who does? I'm so happy that you're here today, and I'm eternally grateful for all the sacrifices you've made – not only for me, but for our family. I know I haven't been the easiest person to talk to, at times. But thank you for never giving up on me.

I can only imagine all the heart-break you went through to leave behind your family and the only home you ever knew, Guatemala. Thank you for everything and for teaching me about our culture and what a help my father was. Thanks to you, I'm proud of being a Latina and am not afraid to embrace my traditions. [Juana then said thank you in her native language, Ixil].

I also thank Ms. Susan Thompson, the best ESOL teacher, who was always there for me in a way no one else was. Without you, I wouldn't have passed my freshman

or sophomore years. Thank you for being my friend. Lastly but not least, I thank my beautiful daughter, Teresita, and my youngest sister, Ashley. You guys are my babies; I can't believe how fast time has gone by. You hold a dear and special place in my heart. I hope you know that I'll always be there with you, even if I'm not right beside you.

I'm so honored to call all of you [in the school] my family; thank you for all your support in helping me grow. I made it here tonight not by luck, but by effort, resilience and refusing to give up – no matter how hard things got for me. Without a doubt, I'm leaving Mountain View with great sadness, but I'm prepared for what the future has in store for me. I know this isn't the end, but the beginning. I'll be taking everything I've learned [here] – family, love, respect. Thank you, Mountain View, for making me a part of your [Timberwolf] pack.

Kimberly Lopez

I'm from El Salvador – a small country known for being rife with violence and corruption. Since I can remember, I've always lived with fear. I remember, at a younger age, living in a neighborhood marked by the [gang] MS-13. I heard shootings, [learned of] many murders in my area and attended funerals of many close peo-

ple – including some of my own classmates.

At age 12, I came to the U.S. and had to leave behind the most important thing in my life, my family. This great opportunity also came with enormous challenges. School was difficult; I had a hard time understanding the language.

In the summer of my freshman year, I found out I was pregnant with my first child at only 14. My son, Emilio, was born in February [2020], just before the pandemic. My daughter, Evangeline, was born in 2022. My two children inspire me every day to become a better person and have reinforced my [determination to] get a good education.

But I struggled to complete my course work. As an independent student and mother, I had to adjust my expectations and timeline. There was no way I could graduate in four years, yet I did the best I could. Being a single mother has been one of the greatest challenges of my life. Motherhood can be stressful; sometimes, you just need a moment to take a break from the children while the housework is still unfinished.

It's crying silently and pretending everything is OK. But life teaches you to never give up [and] to find physical and mental strength. I doubled up classes, took summer school and enrolled in honors

classes. Thanks to hard work, I finally received all my credits and I'm graduating. My commitment to my education, and my resilience, have helped me to be where I am tonight.

The sacrifices have been worth it because of my children; they're my biggest motivation and inspiration. My pursuit of a college education and a future career in cardiology will set an example for them. I hope to make a difference in my own kids' lives and be an example for other Hispanic women.

This is my story, [but] I know I'm not alone. The majority of the students at Mountain View have been faced with similar situations – many without family support or economic subsidies – [and] with a pending immigration status. Without a roof over their heads, being afraid to make an appearance. To those of you like me, don't give up. You will achieve your dreams.

But we couldn't have [done it] without the help of our Mountain View teachers and counselors. To all the Mountain View staff, thank you for welcoming us every day with a joyful smile – sometimes wiping away our tears – and always providing a place that inspires our education. [She then gave a special message to her family in Spanish]. And finally, to my fellow classmates, the graduates of 2026, congratulations – we did it."

Mountain View High's Class of 2026 Graduates

FROM PAGE 4

own. For some, it's been finding a school where you finally feel seen and supported. And for others, it's been stepping off a plane into an unfamiliar place, learning a new language and building a new life. You've refused to let circumstances write your story.

"Class of 2026, with diplomas in hand, we offer you a golden key to your future, as you define it. The door is now open – from your first dorm room to your own piece of real estate – elevating from side hustle to soaring success – your time and dreams await. So shine bright for us all to see.

"Your parents, guardians, teachers and friends all celebrate you in this monumental moment. Let's thank them for being the foundation beneath your feet – the steady ground that made every step of this climb possible. Graduates, continue to rise and carry on the love of this Timberwolf family wherever you go."

Mohrbacher also praised the nonprofit Mountain View Foundation. "Every year, a powerful and generous community comes together – family, friends, faithful alums, local businesses and organizations – all united by one belief: That our Mountain View graduates are worthy of investment," she said. "Through the Mountain View Foundation, that belief has become a legacy.

"Since 1999, the Foundation has award-



Like mother, like daughter: Grad Vanesa Sandoval holds daughter Yareli, 10 months, wearing a mini cap and gown. At left is cousin Abby Lopez.

ed over \$1 million in post-secondary scholarships to more than 600 students. This year, our remarkable Class of 2026 has been awarded an outstanding \$70,500. The Foundation isn't just a financial force – they're family. Their dedication and dollars have opened doors, created opportunities, and

helped turn dreams into destinations. And to every donor and supporter, we thank you and celebrate you."

Next, Principal Erin Whatley addressed the grads, telling them how she and the entire school staff have witnessed their journey toward graduation. "We saw the struggles, the setbacks and the moments when some of you doubted yourselves," she said. "We saw the missed assignments, the attendance meetings, the frustration, the pressure and the times when graduation may have felt far away. But more importantly, we saw what happened when you decided to lock in.

"And that's what makes this moment so powerful. Because locking in isn't about becoming perfect overnight, having life all figured out or never making mistakes again. Locking in is making a decision that your future matters and [that you'll] keep showing up when it would be easier not to, try again after failure, ask for help and stop letting one bad moment define your entire story.

"Some people lock in early; some need more time. Some need life to humble them a little before they realize what they're capable of. But it's never too late to lock in, and many of you are proof of that. We watched students raise grades they thought they never could [and] overcome obstacles most people never even knew they were carrying.

We watched students mature, grow, lead, support one another and begin believing in themselves again.

"We watched students who once sat quietly in doubt begin walking with confidence. And it wasn't because life suddenly became easy. It came from them realizing, 'I can do hard things.' This diploma is proof of that. It's proof you can persevere, overcome obstacles and finish what you started.

"Tonight, people will see the caps and gowns, the smiles, pictures and celebrations. But we'll remember the journey behind it. And that's why we're so proud of you.

Not because you were perfect, but because you kept going. Class of 2026, the world you're walking into won't always be easy. There'll still be moments when you feel uncertain, when things don't go according to plan and you question yourself.

"When those moments come, I hope you remember who you became here. Remember that you already know how to fight for your future, overcome setbacks and keep moving forward when life gets hard. There's no single timeline for success. Some of the strongest and most successful people are the ones who had to learn how to get back up after being knocked down. What matters isn't when you started believing in yourself, but

SEE MOUNT VIEW HIGH, PAGE 15

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Leslie Chekin gives the Personal Achievement Award to Juana Reymundo-Gallego.



Mike Hardy presents the Faculty Excellence Award to Zahra Paiman.



Johan Ibarra Hernandez gets his diploma from Principal Erin Whatley.



Blady Martinez receiving her diploma from Erin Whatley.



Evelyn Clumpkens presents the Citizenship Award to Kimberly Lopez.



Anthony Gipson receives his diploma from Principal Erin Whatley.



Ezzan Moazzam with his diploma from Erin Whatley.



Walter Morales getting his diploma from Principal Erin Whatley.



Nargis Shahamat with her diploma from Erin Whatley.



Elsi Lopez Chicas receives her diploma from Principal Erin Whatley.

Mountain View High's Class of 2026 Graduates

FROM PAGE 15

that you finally did.

“Thank you for letting us be part of your journey. You’ve already proved to yourselves that you can achieve more than you once believed possible. As you leave here tonight, carry your confidence with you. Protect it, build on it – because your story is just getting started. Congratulations, Class of 2026. We’re proud of you, we believe in you and we can’t wait to see what you do next.”

Then, after the three student speakers shared their stories (see sidebar), the school presented three special awards:

❖ The Citizenship Award is given to a stu-

dent who’s helped build a positive school community. Counselor Evelyn Clumpkens presented it to Kimberly Lopez.

❖ The Personal Achievement Award goes to a student who succeeded academically and personally, despite having adult responsibilities, such as a job or a child. English teacher Leslie Chekin gave it to Juana Reymundo-Gallego.

❖ The Faculty Excellence Award is given to the student achieving the greatest academic and personal success, despite significant obstacles. Before presenting it to Zahra Paiman, Social Studies teacher Mike Hardy said, “This year’s award goes to a student

who exemplifies hard work, kindness and leadership. In her third-period class, she helped create a welcoming environment where everyone feels included and supported.

“She leads by example through her strong work ethic, positive attitude and encouragement of others. She consistently lifts up her classmates, reminding them that everyone’s capable of success. Though she may not seek attention, her integrity, compassion and dedication make a lasting impact on those around her. We’re delighted to present the 2026 Faculty Excellence Award to Zahra Paiman.”

Denizens of Capitol Hill

FROM PAGE 7

and all will quickly tell you its tough being the minority party. In terms of visibility or, more importantly, effective action to counter Trump’s executive overreach to date I am overwhelmed by our Virginia team. Of the three, Walkinshaw surprisingly is most

OPINION

visible — condemning administration corruption, domestic abuses and brutality, and national security failures frequently in the press and on national TV. No specific legislative actions taken, but he is filling some of the gaping Democratic opposition voice void. I don’t see much from my Senators, although I do think Kaine has been in the fight to limit Trump’s war powers.

Several hundred thousand people labelled immigrants are being abused and having their rights violated every day. Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md) and Senator Andy Kim (D-NJ) are taking action to help by visiting and exposing what’s happening to them in ICE detention centers. Their actions have served to focus media and ICE attention on these centers.

I decided to survey what our legislators are doing and to encourage them to do more for the thousands under attack. I have been contacting the offices of Walkinshaw, Warner and Kaine for several weeks now and asking the following questions: 1) Has the Congressman (or Senator) visited any Virginia ICE detention centers and reported his findings, When? 2) When is he planning a follow-up visit and reporting on progress? I call their offices every couple of weeks to follow up. The results to date have been disappointing. From their staffs I’ve learned that Senator Warner has visited an ICE detention center three times, between August and December 2025. His office claimed each time he issued a press release. Senator Kaine and Congressman Walkinshaw each had visited one detention center just one time through mid-May, with no more visits scheduled! Staff could not explain why no more visits are expected. Each time I called over the last three months, I also stressed how important I thought the visits and reports were to the well-being of the detainees and their families, citing the experience of Rep. Raskin, for example. Staffers I speak with are generally helpful and friendly — they too fear for the well-being of the detainees! When I asked if they were getting a lot of calls on this subject, one of them told me, “Unfortunately, not many.” Perhaps if they got more calls from more, dear readers, we could move that needle. Join me to try to help those suffering the most.

ENTERTAINMENT

FAIRFAX COUNTY FARMERS MARKETS RETURN

Operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority, these popular markets connect residents with local farmers and food producers at 10 convenient locations. Shop seasonal fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, baked goods and artisanal products, while enjoying a vibrant, open-air market experience.

WEDNESDAYS

McCutcheon/Mount Vernon: April 22-Nov. 25, 8 a.m. - noon. Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane
Oakmont: May 6-Oct. 28, 8 a.m.-noon. Oakmont Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road

Wakefield: May 6-Oct. 28, 2-6 p.m. Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road

THURSDAYS

Annandale: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike

Herndon: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn Street by the Red Caboose

FRIDAYS

McLean: May 1-Oct. 30, 8 a.m.-noon. Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road

Kingstowne: May 1-Oct. 23, 3-7 p.m. In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center

SATURDAYS

Burke: Apr. 18-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway

Reston: Apr. 25-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza

SUNDAYS

Lorton: May 3-Nov. 22, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd.

SUMMER CONCERT & ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

Reston Community Center (RCC) transforms Reston's plazas and parks into community gathering places with its acclaimed Summer Concert & Entertainment Series, running from just before Memorial Day through September. All are invited to enjoy free live music and family-friendly entertainment set in some of Reston's most beloved outdoor spaces as we head into the heart of summer.

Wednesdays: Midweek Music on the Lake

Sunset Concerts | Schedule
Lake Anne Plaza

Wednesdays, June 24 – August 26
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Fan favorites return to Lake Anne Plaza for Sunset Concerts on Wednesday evenings, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. so audiences can enjoy slightly cooler temperatures and golden hour views by the lake.

Thursdays: Fresh Finds at Halley Rise
Take a Break Concert Series | Schedule

Halley Rise (2025 Fulton Place, Reston)
Thursdays, June 25 – August 27
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

In its third year, Take a Break Concert Series spotlights fresh talent in one of Reston's newest neighborhoods. This laid-back, open space offers plenty of room to dance or play and a new 7:30 p.m. start time lets the heat ease off a bit.

Fridays: Two Stops, One Great Night
Happy Hour with Darden & Friends | Schedule

Reston Town Square Park
Fridays, May 22 – June 26
5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

Ease into the evening with jazz at
Happy Hour with Darden & Friends

16 ❖ THE CONNECTION ❖ JUNE 17-30, 2026

at Reston Town Square Park. A cornerstone of the D.C. jazz scene, vocalist and bandleader Darden Purcell curates this series, bringing her warm, swinging sensibility to a relaxed, after-work lineup of top regional talent.

Summerbration Fab Fridays | Schedule
Reston Station

Fridays, May 29 – September 25
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Then head to Reston Station for the always packed Summerbration Fab Fridays, now starting at 7:30 p.m. so you can stop by Happy Hour with Darden first. These high energy cover bands turn the plaza into a dance party with favorite hits all night long.

Saturdays: Playtime in the Park
Family Fun Entertainment Series | Schedule

Reston Town Square Park
Saturdays, July 4 – August 22
10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Saturday mornings bring the Family Fun Entertainment Series to Reston Town Square Park, a summer highlight with puppetry, magic, music, juggling and more! Kids can dance, giggle and get the wiggles out, with plenty of fun for adults too.

Sundays: Classics Under the Sky
Sunday Art in the Park with Shenandoah Conservatory | Schedule

Reston Town Square Park
Sundays, June 21 – August 30
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Spend Sunday evening at Sunday Art in the Park with Shenandoah Conservatory in Reston Town Square Park, where rising classical musicians offer concert quality performances that are friendly, fun and accessible to all ages.

JUNE 18-AUGUST 27

Summer Concert Series, 7-8 p.m. At National Museum of the Marine Corps, 1775 Semper Fidelis Way, Triangle. The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation invites the public to enjoy the 2026 Summer Concert Series at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. From June through August, audiences can experience six free, family-friendly evenings featuring premier U.S. military ensembles representing the Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and Air Force. Concerts are held on the Museum's entry plaza. Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or picnic blankets. Admission and parking are free and open to the public. The Museum, Tun Tavern, and Museum Store will remain open until 6:45 p.m. on concert evenings. Visit the website: <https://www.marineheritage.org/>

Concert Schedule:
❖ June 18, 7 p.m. – U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters

❖ July 2, 7 p.m. – U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps & U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps

❖ July 30, 7 p.m. – U.S. Air Force Band Airmen of Note

❖ August 20, 7 p.m. – U.S. Navy Concert Band

❖ August 27, 7 p.m. – "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band

JUNETEENTH EVENTS

ACROSS THE COUNTY

Celebrate Juneteenth through engaging programs and community events across Fairfax County parks that honor African American history, resilience, culture and freedom.

Featured Events
Juneteenth Celebration at Sully Historic Site

Sully Historic Site, Friday, June 19 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Free Admission



A Summer Concert Series takes place at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle starting June 18 to August 27.



Remembering the Revolution can be seen on Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at the National Museum of the U.S. Army in Fort Belvoir.

Honor emancipation through storytelling, guided tours and interactive family activities. Explore the history of Sully Historic Site and reflect on the stories, resilience and contributions of African Americans in Fairfax County. Enjoy food and community celebration.

Exploring Our Historic Meeting House and Grounds

Frying Pan Farm Park, Saturday, June 20 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Free Admission

Explore the rich history of the park's Meeting House, one of the oldest religious structures in Fairfax County. Staff and volunteers will offer informal tours of the building and grounds, highlighting the history of African Americans in the area.

Family Skate and Dance Night: Juneteenth Celebration

Franconia Rec Center, Saturday, June 20 | 6 to 9 p.m.

Celebrate at this Juneteenth Celebration Family Skate and Dance Night. Wear red, black and green (yellow too) and enjoy a night skating and dancing with your friends, family and community. This event celebrates the resilience, community and possibilities of things to come. Take this opportunity to come out to this event as an early Father's Day celebration too! \$10 per person

JUNE 3-28

McLean Art Society's "Water Stories" Exhibition and June



Connections That Bind, Art & Friendship can be seen June 22 to July 19, 2026 at JoAnn Rose Gallery in Reston.

ENTERTAINMENT

Members Show. At McLean Art Gallery, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean. The McLean Art Gallery is pleased to feature "Water Stories," a new seasonal exhibition from the local nonprofit McLean Art Society. Members of the public are invited to enjoy 200 new works from 45 local artists. Included are paintings in oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor and mixed media; drawings; photography; sculpture; and works in wood, glass, ceramics and jewelry. The Opening Reception is Friday, June 5 from 5-7 p.m. Meet the artists and enjoy live music, wine and light refreshments.

JUNE 4-28

1st Stage Presents "Indecent." At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. From Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel, a deeply moving play inspired by the true events surrounding the controversial 1923 Broadway debut of Sholem Asch's "God of Vengeance"—a play seen by some as a seminal work of Jewish culture, and by others as an act of traitorous libel. Show times: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: Tickets: \$25-\$55 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

SUMMER ON THE GREEN SERIES

Music lovers of all ages are encouraged to grab a lawn chair or picnic blanket and head to the Vienna Town Green for free summer concerts at 6:30 p.m. beginning in June. The Vienna Town Green is located at 144 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. The Summer on the Green series features a wide range of musical genres, including rock, blues, country, reggae, jazz, and children's music performed by local and regional musical acts.

2026 Schedule

June 17: Vienna Moms Inc. presents Rocknocerous - Kids Music
 June 26: 2nd Sole - Classic Rock
 July 10: The Cassaday Concoction - Rock, Blues, Soul, Reggae
 July 24: Fat Chance - Rock
 July 31: US Army Blues Swamp Romp - Jazz and Folk of Louisiana
 Aug. 7: The Maiden Band - Classic Rock 70s to present
 Aug. 14: US Navy Band Commodores - Jazz
 For more information, visit www.viennava.gov/summeronthegreen.

JUNE 6 TO 28

The "CoLab Collage Artists." At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W #B, Lake Anne in Reston. The "CoLab Collage Artists" - Parinaz Bahadori, Jennifer Duncan, Rosemarie Forsythe, Doug Fuller, Julia Malakoff, Molly McCracken, Marthe McGrath, Jennifer Penick, and Doug Schulte - will present works highlighting the benefits of collage as a collaborative medium. This will be the third year in a row that the group of nine DMV area artists has exhibited at RAGS. The artists each incorporate collage techniques into their diverse individual styles, utilizing a wide-ranging assortment of paints, paper, fabrics, and found and handcrafted materials.

JUNE 13 TO JULY 5

Revelations Art Exhibition. At

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Lake Fairfax 250th Independence Day Celebration is Saturday, June 27, 2026 at Lake Fairfax Park.

Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Building 10, Lorton. Internationally exhibited artist Fernando Osorio invites the public to experience Revelations, a compelling exhibition of abstract paintings on view from June 13 through July 5, 2026, at the Workhouse Arts Center. The exhibition presents 12 powerful works that explore the expressive language of color, form, texture, and contrast. Through dynamic compositions and an intuitive visual vocabulary, Osorio creates spaces for reflection, emotion, and spiritual resonance. His paintings move beyond representation, inviting viewers into a contemplative encounter with abstraction and the unseen dimensions of experience. Opening Reception: June 13, 2026 from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

JUNE 13 - JULY 13

Vienna Liberty Amendments Month.

Town of Vienna's 6th Liberty Amendments Month festivities begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 13, 2026, with the Liberty Amendments Month parade down Maple Avenue to Nutley Street, ending at the Juneteenth festival at First Baptist Church, 450 Orchard St. NW, Vienna. The Juneteenth celebration will feature live music, food trucks, a fashion show, children's entertainment, a mobile video game truck, bounce houses, a petting zoo and voter registration until 3 p.m. See full month's calendar here: [https://www.viennava.gov/files/assets/town/v/1/parks-and-rec/pdfs/lam/2026-vienna-lam-bro-](https://www.viennava.gov/files/assets/town/v/1/parks-and-rec/pdfs/lam/2026-vienna-lam-brochure.pdf)

[chure.pdf](#)

FREE CONCERTS IN THE PARK

At Burke Lake Park, Burke. 7 p.m.

every Wednesday night from June 24 to Aug. 19 at Burke Lake Park for an incredible line-up of bands, food trucks, 2 Silos beer, and Ice Cream. The atmosphere is informal, so bring a picnic blanket, lawn chairs, and relax with friends and family.

SCHEDULE

June 24 - The Road Ducks. Food Trucks: BABU-JI, Cousins Maine Lobster and Ello Gelato
 July 1 - ChumpChange. Food Trucks: Ned's New England Deck, Paisanos and Bruster's of Alexandria Ice Cream
 July 8 - The Magic Trio. Food Trucks: Roaming Coyote, Paisanos and Ello Gelato
 July 15 - SoHo Down. Food Trucks: Kaziville (hot dogs), Cousins Maine Lobster Paisanos and Bruster's of Alexandria
 July 22 - JunkFood Band. Food Trucks: Roaming Coyote, Paisanos and Ello Gelato
 July 29 - The Skip Castro Band. Food Trucks: Kaziville (hot dogs), Ned's New England Deck and Bruster's of Alexandria
 Aug. 5. The English Channel. Food Trucks: BABU-JI, Cousins Maine Lobster and Ello Gelato
 Aug. 12 - The Randy Thompson Band. Food Trucks: BABU-JI, Roaming Coyote and Bruster's of Alexandria
 Aug. 19 - The Soul Shakers. Food Trucks: Kaziville (hot dogs), Ned's New England Deck and Bruster's of Alexandria



The Bennie and the Jets: Tribute to Elton John Concert is Thursday, June 25, 2026 at McLean Central Park Amphitheatre in McLean.

WEDNESDAYS, JUNE 17, 24

OFC Open Game Nights. 6:30-9 p.m.

At The Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Drop in for open game time at The Old Firehouse Center to enjoy relaxed, friendly ping pong or Mah Jongg while connecting with others.

JUNE 18 TO JULY 30

Summer Concert Series. At McLean

Central Park Amphitheatre. McLean Community Center's famous, free concerts are back at the McLean Central Park amphitheater! Grab your family and friends and enjoy live music every Thursday evening from June 18 to July 30 at 7 p.m. June concerts are below:

Thur. June 18, 7 p.m.- The Pack Drumline

Thur. June 25, 7 p.m.- Bennie and The Jets: Tribute to Elton John

FRIDAY/JUNE 19

Aquapoolooza (pool party). 3-6 p.m.

At Lake Newport Pool, Reston, Free/RA Members & RecPass holders. \$25/Non RecPass holders (free for kids under 3). All are asked to pre-register as space is limited.

JUNE 20-21

Two Day Father's Day Weekend

Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station.

Diverse Exhibits: Marvel at meticulously crafted models, showcasing intricate details and impressive layouts in both N and T scales. Interactive: Experience live demonstrations on various aspects of model train operation, from basic setup to advanced techniques. Family-Friendly: Families are welcome! Many of our volunteer conductors provide interactive stations where children can engage ("drive") with model trains, ensuring the event is fun for all ages.

Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$4; ages 13 and older, \$6. First Responders, Teachers and Military, \$5; Seniors 65+, \$5. www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org, www.facebook.com/FFXS-RR.703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/JUNE 21

51st Annual Sully Antique Car Show.

10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, Chantilly. Explore hundreds of antique and classic cars; see judging and awards throughout the day; and enjoy restoration and specialty car displays, live music, food vendors, children's activities, a kids' tent and opportunities to explore Sully's history. New this year: Car owners can register online for faster, easier event entry. Online tickets are available through June 19: \$12 for adults ages 16-64, \$10 for seniors ages 65 and older and \$8 for children ages 15 and younger. Day-of tickets are available at the gate: \$15 for adults ages 16-64, \$12 for seniors ages 65 and older and \$10 for children ages 15 and younger.

JUNE 22 TO JULY 19

Connections That Bind, Art & Friendship.

At JoAnn Rose Gallery, 1609-A Washington Plaza North, Reston. Receptions: June 28, 2-4 p.m. & closing reception July 19, 2-4 p.m. Sandra Dovberg is a long-time member of Reston Art Gallery and Studios. She is downsizing and offering a rare opportunity to acquire original work to grace your walls at reduced prices of 50% off label prices. Her paintings include a variety of mediums & collage materials emphasizing her constant awareness of color, line, shape, texture, memory and academic training. There will be seven other artists displaying: Pat Macintyre, Marthe McGrath, Cindy Grisdela, Jenn Duncan, Julia Malakoff, Rosemarie Forsythe and Doug Fuller.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 24

Senior Movie Day. 10 a.m. At the movie theater in Reston Town Center, Reston. Reston Association presents Senior Movie Day, sponsored by Friends of Reston. Join us on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Coffee, donuts and OJ are provided, and door prizes are distributed prior to the movie.

June 24: Now You See Me, Now you Don't
 July 22: After the Hunt

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Obituary

Obituary



Joan Callahan Frankhauser, 90, of Great Falls, Virginia, passed away peacefully on May 27, 2026, surrounded by the love of her family.

A devoted Catholic, Joan's life was defined by her unwavering faith, her dedication to her family, and a generous spirit that touched everyone who knew her. Born to the late Frank and Lauretta Callahan of Waynesboro, Virginia, she carried a lifelong pride for her hometown. There, during her teenage years, she was crowned May Queen and joyfully rode atop the town float. In her early twenties, Joan worked as a second-grade teacher, a profession that perfectly suited her patient and kind nature.

Joan's heart be longed entirely to her beloved husband, Mahlon. Their love story began with a twist of fate when Mahlon was initially set up on a blind date with one of Joan's roommates. Taking one look at him, Joan turned to her friend and declared, "Sorry, he's mine." They were inseparable from that moment on. Together, they shared a passion for life and a love of dancing, spending many nights over the years when they lived in McLean spinning across the floor at the historic Colvin Run Dance Hall. In a beautiful full-circle touch, Joan's most recent apartment in Great Falls overlooked the very dance hall where they had spent so many happy times.

For nearly forty years, Joan and Mahlon called McLean, Virginia home, where they were part of a uniquely tight-knit neighborhood community. The neighbors supported one another like family, gathering throughout the year for festive St. Patrick's Day and Christmas celebrations. They frequently found any excuse just to be together—including one memorable adventure where the entire neighborhood rented an RV and piled in wearing custom-made T-shirts that proudly read, "Have Party, Will Travel."

Beyond their shared joy, Joan was a tireless, fiercely devoted caretaker to Mahlon following a traumatic brain injury, selflessly dedicating her life to his comfort and well-being with unconditional love and strength. Deeply committed to their faith and community, both Joan and Mahlon served proudly as Eucharistic ministers at Saint Luke Catholic Church in McLean. They were also long-term, active members of the Marriage Encounter and Cursillo de Cristiandad movements, where they nurtured both their own marriage and their faith community.

Joan is survived by her children, Scott Frankhauser, Greg Frankhauser, and Victoria Esposito, all of whom were blessed by her protective love. She will be deeply missed and forever remembered for her fierce devotion, her love of family, and her enduring, generous spirit.

Service Details
Funeral Mass: A Liturgy of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 1:00 PM on Friday, June 12, 2026, at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church (1020 Springvale Rd, Great Falls, VA). Services are being coordinated through Murphy Funeral Homes. Following the Mass, family and friends are warmly invited to gather for a reception in the church hall to share memories and celebrate Joan's life.

Interment: A private burial ceremony will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2026, where Joan will be laid to rest alongside her beloved Mahlon, reunited in eternal peace.

Memorial Contributions: In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Joan's honor to the Brain Injury Association of America (biausa.org), continuing her legacy of care and advocacy. <https://biausa.org/give-and-fundraise>

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Floyd Mercantile Spins People-Minded Music for Upcoming Jammin' Java Show

Folk band crafted songs in abandoned hardware store for new album.

By MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

The new single "Some People," by Floyd Mercantile gets the mind thinking about people you know and new people you meet. The world is full of all kinds, and this song is one-of-a-kind using vocals, a pair of rhythm guitars in an abandoned general store for unique sounds and backdrop.

In April 2025, Peter Mulvey and Jenna Nicholls, along with guitarist Ross Bellenoit, hit a country town in Virginia named Floyd, and found the abandoned store in the town. They whipped out the guitars, threw it all together with Righteous Babe Records to create this album full of songs that make one think, and the band likes that. Mulvey thinks that "art kicks the dust off of ordinary life."

Another song on the album, "Your Considerable Charms," is sung by Nicholls and is kept in rhythm with Bellenoit on the slide guitar. All three are sitting in the corner, lit by a mid-day sun coming in through the window embellishing the hometown look. The old atmosphere added some character to their sound, said Nicholls.

"The old cash register was there, glasses and stuff, it was really great," she said. They used a 100-year-old piano too that they bought from a thrift store.

The inspiration for their name partially came from New Mountain Mercantile of Floyd, a shop on Main Street with a colorful sign and product line which focuses on locally-produced. "Our shop offers a unique items from various Floyd artists," they say on their website which is full of items like fragrance candles, and women's clothing from "Habitat," and "Color Me Cotton." It's all earthy to say the least.

Their spring tour included Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and soon New York City in June before coming down I-95 for their show at Jammin' Java on June 28. Nicholls lives in Woodstock, New York too so she brings in a little flavor from the legendary music festival in 1969. In town she rubs elbows from time to time with John Sebastian, one of the famous musicians that played at the festival and is now a resident.

Their songs on this album show an aspect of open mindedness and "a commentary on population in general" said their agent Mark McKenna, who works with several bands from his office in New York City.

Floyd Mercantile's coming show
Sunday, June 28 at 7 p.m.
Jammin' Java
227 Maple Ave E, Vienna, VA 22180
(703) 239-3805



Band members Peter Mulvey and Jenna Nicholls, along with guitarist Ross Bellenoit.



Floyd Mercantile focuses on home spun music and lyrics.



Jenna Nicholls lives in Woodstock, NY where she's gained a little music magic.

Burton Won't Be "Worsen"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Nearly three and a half years since his birth, Burton is finally learnin'. After two-plus months of misbehaven' we finally hired a dog trainer to get us and Burton back on track. Certainly, after three dogs, we knew not just the basics, but the intermediates, maybe even some of the advanced. Nevertheless, his obstinate behavior made it quite clear that Burton was in control. However, since he would "Sit," usually "Stay," sometimes "Come," once-in-a-while "Shake" non-stop with alternating front paws, and walk on a leash (but rarely "Heal,"), we thought we were in control. We weren't. He was. Although we didn't realize until it manifested in the following behaviors: he did struggle with "Down," regularly jumped and growled at moving cars and always was a "nosy parker," needing to check out everything he saw or heard in our neighborhood; it all seemed relatively normal/familiar - to us; growing pains you might say. But worst of all, and what precipitated our call/need for help; while returning home from any and all walks, Burton would stop and fall/lay down (it's called the "pancake flop" - as seen on the internet) and refuse to get up until he was good and ready. It was not good and he was never ready. Despite our coaxing and/or pulling on his leash/collar - while encouraging (I use that term loosely, yelling actually), Burton would just give me the side eye while continuing to lay on his side, barely moving a muscle. Walking our way home, Burton would flop at least a half-a-dozen times with each flop causing a 5 - 15-minute delay. And what was his absolute worst behavior, once we finally made it back to our house, Burton would refuse to go inside leading to an inevitable tug-of-war which we would lose and resulted in yet another delay. As such, walks with Burton became increasingly frustrating and terribly unpleasant. We were at a loss as to how to survive the ordeal.

As it happened, I needed to pick up some syringes at the vet's office for one of our cats, Andrew, who needs daily steroid injections. After a 10-minute or so drive, I arrived, parked my car and walked inside. As I was standing against their front counter, waiting my turn, I noticed a business card holder in plain sight to my left. I picked up one of the cards. It was for a dog trainer - "35 years' experience." That's a coincidence, I thought, we need a dog trainer, desperately, so I put a card in my wallet to take home and discuss with Dina.

Having already considered changing Burton's dog collar and leash, getting him a full exam, visiting a dog behaviorist and even consulting a pet psychic - which we did over the phone, we decided it made sense to call this dog trainer and hear what he had to say. When we spoke, he sounded very reasonable as he laid out his methodology/philosophy: "Dogs are a pack animal and need a leader." And from what dog misbehavior I was describing, Burton, he said, was "definitely disrespecting me/my authority and treating me like just another member of the pack." Not the kind of relationship I should be having with me dog, apparently. Since we agreed with most of what he was saying, we decided to hire him/give him a chance to change our pack dynamic.

It's been five weeks since the training visits began. Burton's behavior has done an about face. Our joke has been: "who stole our dog and what happened to Burton?" With the help of an "e-collar," and transmitter, Burton has not only turned the corner, he's on the straight and narrow to leash-less living. He is a completely different - and now responsive/obedient, dog. It's amazing. His behavior has evolved from recalcitrant to compliant almost. No more "pancake flops," no more stick eating, no more rock swallowing, no more grass grazing and no more battles to get him in the house. He has become an amazing and wonderful dog. And he comes running when we call his name. Unbelievable. From our perspective, he looks happy. Smiling almost. He has been transformed and per his training, so have we.

Now if I can only find an e-collar for my wife.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

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